

Wilson

Debra L. Wilson

EIS000995

119 Park Ave.

RECEIVED

Oakland, Mo. 63122

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314-821-7576

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In regard to the permanent storage of high-level radioactive waste at a Yucca Mountain site, please do not risk the safety, health or lives of millions of people (estimated at 50 million) along the chosen rail route when shipping the nuclear waste from the East to the West, across the heart of our country. Not only is Yucca Mountain not an appropriate site to store this type of toxic waste, but safety issues along the shipping route make this project too great of a risk. I agree with the experts who recommend storing the existing waste on site, where the radioactive contamination is virtually permanent already.

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Most importantly, insist the nuclear power operators stop creating additional nuclear waste until there are truly safe and permanent ways to deal with the storage and/or disposal issues that exist for high-level radioactive waste. Help ensure that as long as mankind exists there will be no danger of contamination from this existing nuclear poison. |

In addition, to help ease my mind and the minds of the millions of citizens along the shipping route, please respond to these questions:

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- | What guarantees are there that this nuclear waste will remain in storage permanently at Yucca Mountain, if shipped there? Is it at all possible that the waste would have to be transported again at some point in the future, once more endangering life all along the shipping route? | Have the plans for shipment or storage for the huge amount of radioactive waste changed

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at all in light of the recent seismic activity in the area around Yucca Mountain?

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- Since this project is, at best, very expensive and extremely risky, why is the federal government taking the responsibility for this high-level radioactive waste, "bailing out" the nuclear power industry? Why are these utilities allowed to continue producing this extremely toxic, very long-lived waste if they are not able to safely manage and store the vast amount of waste they already have produced?

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- If this project is carried out, once the high-level radioactive waste leaves the reactor sites, how will you avoid accidents or sabotage all along the shipping route? Will emergency management personnel all along the route be fully trained and equipped for a "criticality" accident? What can they really do other than cordon off the area? Are you aware of how many schools, hospitals, office buildings and other densely populated buildings there are very close to the proposed routes here in the St. Louis area? What is the ratio of emergency personnel who are trained to respond to high-level radioactive waste transport accidents to the general population in any given area, or say, in Oakland, Missouri, where my family lives?

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- You see, I live less than a half a mile from the tracks that were used for the Three Mile Island shipments and, also, from a major interstate highway that runs through St. Louis. In the event of a worst-case scenario accident in my community, would my family be able to escape our home, schools or places of employment in time to avoid any contamination and, if we did escape, how long would it be before we could return to normal life in our home and neighborhood?

9 • Who is liable for any injury to citizens, including the responding emergency personnel? Who is liable for damage to private property in the event of an accident or sabotage that results in radioactive contamination?

10 • Has there been any actual testing of the specific container that will be used for shipping and storage, or has it been mostly, or even partially, tested by computer simulation? How extensive have the fire tests been for the casks that are to be used? During the Three Mile Island shipments, there was an accident on the very same, highly inspected and maintained train tracks, luckily not involving the TMI shipments. This accident sticks in my mind because it was in a very hard to reach area that was, also, close to highly populated communities. The accident involved train cars hanging, suspended, off of a train trestle over a river. For many hours they hung there while a high-intensity, long-duration fire blazed beneath them. It was a struggle for the emergency personnel to get to the accident site, severely delaying their response. What dangers would this type of accident present if the train cars were carrying the casks containing high-level radioactive waste from nuclear reactors nationwide?

12 • Also, what safeguards will be in place during the shipping and storage process in case of failed equipment (for instance O-ring failure, as in the TMI casks), human error (as when a buffer car on a TMI fuel train was labeled as containing calcium carbide, an explosive compound), vehicular accidents (such as the accident involving a citizen's car which stalled on the tracks, here in St. Louis, and was hit by a TMI train), or sabotage (unfortunately, terrorism is an increasing reality in today's society that must not be ignored)? Is there any possibility of gaseous pressure building up inside the shipping casks, leading to an leakage or even an explosion? Are the gases in the casks to be monitored during

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13 transportation and storage before emplacement in the repository? And if
| so, how is the monitoring to be performed--and with what frequency? | In
14 fact, | how will all of the safeguards be monitored, both outside and inside
of the shipping casks, during the long trip to Yucca Mountain over all
types of terrain and through all sorts of weather? |

I would appreciate it if you would answer my questions thoroughly
enough to try to convince me that the thousands of shipments of nuclear
waste that you want to send through my neighborhood are no threat to my
family. I admit I will be a very hard sell, as we all are when it comes to the
15 safety of our children. | Please respect my request that everyone involved in
this proposal for the shipping and storage of these deadly materials reconsider
this project. It is up to you to take the responsibility to make the best and
safest choices for all of the families who live anywhere near the potential
shipping route or disposal site. Consider the lives you will be endangering.
Consider the legacy you will be leaving distant generations if shipment of this
high-level radioactive waste to Yucca Mountain proceeds as planned and the
nuclear power operations are allowed to fill up all of the recovered space at
their sites with yet more high-level radioactive waste. Use your authority,
expertise and influence to call for the immediate halt of the production of
nuclear waste and demand the intelligent and diligent handling of the existing
radioactive waste, a poison that will threaten generations far into the future. |

Sincerely,

Debra L. Wilson

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